

Subject: Kuehl Happenings

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This week we celebrated the first anniversary of the 3rd District's "Food for the Soul" program, a very special grant program that feeds the physical, social and emotional well-being of people who've experienced homelessness by helping them develop and work with volunteers on urban gardens.

In 2015, grants totaling \$175,000 were given to 13 organizations, including Safe Place for Youth, Lutheran Social Services, Upward Bound House, Westside Food Bank, and Kiss the Ground. I toured the beautiful [Kiss The Ground Garden](#) in the Venice Arts Plaza, with its gigantic century plants, chard, squash, and sunflowers, and was so proud that we could help to create and maintain a great space like this!

To be sure, these are not your 'garden variety' gardens. Too often, people who have experienced homelessness feel isolated and ostracized. When people come together in a common effort like a community garden, they feel valued and they value others.

I can't wait to grow (no pun intended) the program even bigger this year and beyond. Organizations interested in applying can [get more info and fill out an online application here](#).

Read More: [Celebrating Food for the Soul's First Year!](#)



On my first ride on the new Expo line extension to Santa Monica yesterday, I joined the LA Chapter of Women in Transportation, a fantastic group of women transit professionals from the public and private sectors -- many of whom played an integral role in the new Expo Line extension which opens to the public May 20th! We started out in Culver City and happily posed for the pic above at the terminus in Santa Monica at Colorado and Fourth.

It was especially great seeing Santa Monica Council Members Gleam Davis and Pam O'Connor, and Expo Construction Authority CEO Samantha Bricker who have worked tirelessly for years to make this a reality!

Later this week, I'll email you a fun and cool video project we've been working on to get the word out about the Expo Line extension. I think you'll really get a kick out of it!

Read: [Los Angeles's New Train Gets You To The Beach Without A Car](#)

Read More: [Here's what you need to know about parking at the three new Expo](#)

[Line stations](#)



We kicked off Tuesday's Board meeting by honoring the "Outstanding Nurses of the Year" from the Departments of Health Services, Children and Family Services, Public Health, Mental Health, and the Fire and Sheriff's Departments, in celebration of Nurse Recognition Week. Congrats to Jennifer Smith and Nesi Napod (above), the honorees from the Third District!

We also passed a motion by Supervisor Don Knabe requesting a report back in two weeks on a plan to expand and provide additional Field Office Services in the ten Department of Public Works Building and Safety District Offices in order to create convenient Local One Stop Centers for permits. The Board also approved my amendment to include in the report an assessment of how we can better utilize "e-consult" and video conferencing services to make it easier for residents to access County departments.

Read about that and much more from the meeting in [this week's Board Report](#).



Smoking cessation has been a real public health success story, as we've managed to reverse decades-long trends of tobacco use. Now, however, we must deal with the associated declining tobacco sales tax, which has been funding our First Five projects on early childhood health and education around the state. At this month's First 5 LA meeting, the Commission reviewed the draft Proposed Budget for FY 2016-17. Almost completely dependent on tobacco sales tax, this First 5 LA budget makes great strides toward aligning spending with declining revenue, reflecting a 27% decrease from last year's budget and a shift in our new strategic direction.

We renewed contracts for several programs, including the Early Identification and Intervention initiative, which screens children from underserved communities for developmental delays at six locations throughout LA County.

And finally, we congratulated longtime Commissioner Suzanne Bostwick on her retirement. As the Interim Director of Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Programs for the Department of Public Health, she has made an impact in so many areas helping

children and families, including home visitation, data collection, and outreach efforts. I thank her for her 25 years of County service and wish her the very best in her retirement.



Finally, a big shout out to Timothy Lippman and our great West Valley staff who teamed up with the Topanga Emergency Management Task Force last weekend for the "2016 Ready Set Go! Emergency Preparedness Fair."

County departments, including Fire, Sheriffs, Mental Health, Animal Control and Emergency Management joined members of the task force in updating Topanga residents about the most up-to-date emergency planning information to keep their families safe.

Have a great week!



Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

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